



Consular Section
United States Embassy
16 Kozyak Street
1407 Sofia, Bulgaria

NONIMMIGRANT VISA INFORMATION

A valid VISA is necessary for most aliens who wish to apply for entry into the United States. Under U.S. law, all aliens seeking admission are presumed to require an immigrant visa unless they establish that they are entitled to receive a visa in one of the nonimmigrant visa categories.

A nonimmigrant visa for a particular category is valid for entry only for the purpose for which it was originally issued. For example, a student visa cannot be used for entry as a visitor, nor can the possessor of a visitor visa enter to study. Temporary visitors are not permitted to work while in the United States. Unauthorized employment is a violation of the law that can lead to deportation. It may also prevent you from receiving U.S. visas in the future.

Please Note: The validity period shown on a nonimmigrant visa relates only to the period during which it may be used in making application for admission into the United States. It does not indicate the length of time the alien may spend in the United States. The U.S. immigration authorities at the port of entry determine the period for which the bearer of a nonimmigrant visa is authorized to remain in the United States. Remaining in the United States beyond the period authorized is a violation of law that can lead to deportation. It may also prevent you from receiving U.S. visas in the future.

Most applications must be submitted at a **nonimmigrant visa interview appointment**. After paying your fee at one of the authorized branches of Unionbank, you should schedule your appointment online; see our home page at <http://www.usembassy.bg/consular/consular.html> for bank branch locations and scheduling details.

AT THE TIME OF APPLICATION EACH APPLICANT MUST SUBMIT:

- **a valid international passport** Your passport should be valid for at least six months longer than your intended period of stay in the United States.
- **completed and signed application forms**
 - **The DS-156 form must be submitted by all applicants.** It is available in English for completion online, at <http://evisaforms.state.gov>. This is the “barcode” form, which is **required from all applicants for F, M, J, H, L, O, P, Q or C1/D visas**, for students, exchange program participants, temporary workers, trainees, intra-company transferees, athletes, performing artists, the dependent family members of any of the above, and crewmembers. It must be printed out and ALL THREE PAGES presented at the interview appointment. We highly recommend that all applicants use this form, for expedited processing.
 - **The DS-157 form must be submitted by all applicants 16 or more years of age.**
 - **The DS-158 form must be submitted by all applicants for F, J or M visas for students, exchange program participants and their dependent family members.**

The DS-156, DS-157 and DS-158 forms are also available on paper, from the security guard at the U.S. Embassy, or may be downloaded from our website: <http://www.usembassy.bg/consular/nivforms.html>. Applicants for visitor visas may use the Bulgarian-language version of the forms, if necessary.

A separate application form is required for each traveler, regardless of age, and whether or not more than one person is included in the same passport. Complete the application forms by TYPING or PRINTING all of the answers. **EVERY QUESTION MUST BE ANSWERED**; you may write **NONE** or **NOT APPLICABLE** if appropriate.

- **a recent photograph** The photo must have been taken within the past 6 months, 50 mm square with the head centered in the frame, of the full face, against a white or off-white background. It should be stapled to the appropriate space on the DS-156 form, keeping the staples as far as possible from the face. The photograph requirements are described in further detail at: <http://www.usembassy.bg/consular/fotosize.html>
- **a valid payment receipt** This should be the yellow copy of the receipt for payment of the \$100.00 nonimmigrant visa application-processing fee at an authorized branch of Unionbank, dated within the past 12 months. The application fee is nonrefundable if the applicant does not apply or is denied a visa.
- **documents in support of the application for visa** Certain categories of nonimmigrant visa require special documentation that can be furnished only by an authority in the United States. These categories include **students**, who must have a valid I-20 form issued by the prospective school, signed and dated by the student; **exchange visitors**, who must have a valid DS-2019 form issued by the sponsoring organization, signed and dated by the applicant; and **temporary workers, trainees, intra-company transferees, athletes, performing artists, and cultural exchange visitors**, all of whom must have a notice of approval of a petition on their behalf approved by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

If applying for a **visitor visa**, applicants may bring an invitation letter. If applying for a visa to visit a friend, relative or business associate in the United States (American citizen, green card holder or foreign citizen with legal visa status in the United States), they should bring a copy of a document showing that person's immigration status in the United States, as well as that of any other close relatives who are in the United States (e.g. photocopy of U.S. passport, green card, other type of visa, etc.).

Applicants may present any additional documents that they feel support their claim that they have strong ties to their country of permanent residence and will return home after a temporary visit to the United States (such as proof of ownership of property, bank statements, proof of employment, proof of family ties, etc.).

- **birth certificate(s) of applicant(s) and of their children, if any**
- **previous passports, if they contain evidence of prior visas and/or international travel**
- **Applicants under the age of 18 who are not traveling with both parents** must submit a **notarized declaration**, signed by both parents (or the one parent not accompanying the child), which states the parent(s) not traveling give(s) permission for the child to travel to the United States, when and for how long. The declaration must be accompanied by the applicant's birth certificate and copies of both parents' international passports or identity cards.

All documents that the applicant wishes to have taken into consideration at the interview must accompany the initial application submitted at the cashier's window.

Due to space and security considerations, applicants must be unaccompanied at their visa interviews in the Consular Section. Nobody will be allowed to be present with the applicant(s), except in cases when the applicant is under the age of 18. In this case the parent(s) or legal guardians may accompany the minor child.

Please visit our website, **<http://www.usembassy.bg/consular/consular.html>**, for more detailed information on applying for a nonimmigrant visa.